

BRIEFS

LONGEST-SERVING PROFESSOR DIES

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Maurice Hinson, 84, world-famous pianist and musicologist who was the longest-serving faculty member in the history of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., died Nov. 11 after a battle with cancer. He was the senior professor of piano at the seminary and taught courses there for 58 years. "He was a wonderful Christian gentleman who combined his love for students with his love for music, having a very rare gift both as a pianist and as one of the great scholars of the piano as an instrument," said R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary. Hinson was also one of the seminary's most widely-published scholars, with 14 books and over 100 articles in music publications.

NEW FAITH INDEX RATES COMPANIES

RALEIGH, N.C. (Special) — The Faith Driven Consumer organization of Raleigh, N.C., has released its first Faith Quality Index (FQI), which will annually rate how well major brands acknowledge faith driven consumers in the marketplace. The top companies this year include Chick-fil-A, Hobby Lobby, Interstate Batteries, Tyson Foods, Cracker Barrel, Walmart, and Thrivent Financial, according to a press release from the organization.

PANEL BEMOANS LIB ATTITUDES

WASHINGTON (BP) — Liberal intolerance is suppressing freedom of belief and conscience in the United States, religious and secular panelists agreed in a discussion at Georgetown University. "I am angered by it," said Phil Zuckerman, sociology professor at Pitzer College in Claremont, Ca., and an atheist. "It is upsetting, and it is disturbing." Kirsten Powers, USA Today columnist and political analyst for Fox News, noted, "When you have very little ideological diversity, ...what do you get? You get authoritarianism."

Study group proposed



UNITY TALK — Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd, National Baptist Convention President Jerry Young, and leading pastors of both denominations discuss the church's role in racial unity at Mission Mississippi's Racial Reconciliation Celebration Nov. 4 at the Jackson Convention Center. (BP photo)

Floyd, Young also agree to discuss racial healing comm.

JACKSON, Miss. (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd and National Baptist Convention President Jerry Young have agreed to appoint a joint study group and perhaps a steering committee to continue dialogue on racial healing among Christians and ultimately across the nation.

Floyd presented the idea to Young at the Mission Mississippi Racial Reconciliation Celebration Nov. 4 at the Jackson Convention Center, recommending that both men appoint perhaps three members from each Baptist group to continue dialogue on a conference call basis and determine three or four steps to implement to achieve racial reconciliation.

"Not to minimize anything, but we want to be able to have dreams that we can conquer, and we have to crawl before we walk, and we have to remember we're nothing more than a bunch of preachers trying to proclaim the Gospel to a world that's desperately hurting."

Ronnie Floyd

Southern Baptist Convention President

ber we're nothing more than a bunch of preachers trying to proclaim the Gospel to a world that's desperately hurting."

Floyd said to Young, "Would you be cool with that?"

"I would be cool with that," Young responded. "I think it's absolutely on time. I wrote down, 'Why don't we establish a steering committee for that very same reason. ...I think progress is not about speed. It's about direction.'"

Floyd acknowledged the possibility of a steering committee. "He and I will work together to just really get to appointing two or three of you guys from each one of our conventions and try to work through this, and perhaps one of those [takeaway] things can be your idea about a steering committee or some kind of functional task force, as was suggested before, between our conventions."

Floyd is senior pastor of multi-campus Cross Church in northwestern Arkansas. Young is senior pastor of New Hope Church in Jackson.

Biloxi boy at center of divisive Barbie ad

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — Mattel's Moschino Barbie commercial featuring for the first time a boy playing with the doll has gone viral across the Internet, but could contribute to gender confusion and distort God's intended image of humanity, say experts in gender identity issues and ministry to those experiencing same sex attraction.



GREGORY

Seven-year-old Taylor Gregory Rodriguez of Biloxi is the boy depicted throughout the advertisement as a Barbie fan.

"The ad is a symptom of so many things that have gone wrong in our world and are affecting children, such as children growing up without fathers, the breakdown of marriage, the blurring of gender roles, and hypersexualized media," said Jeff Johnston, a Focus on the Family issues analyst who

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Stocking stuffers no longer

Most boomers alive today can remember the thrill of finding our favorite 45s stuffed in the stockings on Christmas morning. Don't know what a "45" was? Well, it was a music delivery system that was prevalent before iTunes came along. Actually, a long time before iTunes came along. Let's just leave it at that.

Pop music has always been edgy and provocative, even in the old days of 45s. Suggestive rhythms and riffs, matched with overwrought lyrics about young love, gave a lot of us a lot of unrealistic ideas about life that were soon dispelled by adulthood. That was then. This is now.

It's too bad the music industry has become just as wicked and perverse as every other form of secular entertainment in this country. Along with movies, television, and radio, the music industry has for many years been in a race to see just how low it can take humanity. "The coarser the better," seems to be the slogan of the modern music industry.

The worst offenders on today's music scene extol the virtues of raping their mothers, killing policemen, running drugs, shooting disrespectful girlfriends, and engaging in every form of perverse sex known to man, all while dressed in as little clothing as possible. There have been quite a few number one hits lately that dealt with committing those crimes and many others, and some of the dregs of society are being lifted up as role models while filling our children's ears (and minds) with such cultural sewage.

The music industry has never been a guardian of the country's morality, but the so-called "artists" of today have taken us all to new lows — and America is paying the price.

Rapper Eminem, who has written and performed a number of songs that denigrate African-Americans and suggest killing homosexuals, reached even deeper into the gutter to come up with the lyrics for his song, *We Are Americans*.

In the song, Eminem raps, "[Expletive deleted] money. I don't rap for dead presidents. I'd rather see the President dead." In the world of rap jargon, "dead presidents" refers to money, since most U.S. currency carries the images of dead former U.S. presidents.

There are a number of people in federal prison today for threatening harm to the president, but not Eminem. He's an "artist," and such depravity is to be admired as "art."

Are these the kind of songs we want in our children's stockings, hung with

care by the fireplace? Do we want our teens repeating such lyrics over and over, until the threshold for violent acts is reduced to zero in their developing minds? Christian parents should take a hard look (or listen, rather) at today's pop music.

Too many parents think pop music is harmless, regardless of the subject matter. They argue, "When I was growing up, pop music glorified drug use but I didn't turn into a dope head." While that may be true, many other young people back then were ruined by the drugs promoted in those songs. Even more to the point, how many songs of any pop music era called upon youths to torture, murder, rape, and destroy anyone who gets in the way of their pleasure? A whole music culture has sprung up around such behavior, and is being supported by unwitting parents too timid to take action.

WorldNet Daily columnist Thomas Jipping thinks all of this has a tragic effect.

The teenage murderer of Officer William Robertson in Milwaukee said he was inspired by lyrics from gangsta rapper Tupac Shakur. The teenage murderer of Texas State Trooper Bill Davidson actually defended himself by arguing that violent gangsta rap motivated him to kill. To murder his father in Los Angeles, Christopher Seely lured him to his bedroom by blasting on his stereo a rock song in which the singer fantasizes about killing his father.

Mitchell Johnson, who with Andrew Golden killed a teacher and four students and wounded 10 others in Jonesboro, Ark., listened to Tupac Shakur. Kip Kinkel, who murdered his parents in Springfield, Ore., consumed the violent nihilism of shock-rocker Marilyn Manson. So did Andrew Wurst, who killed a teacher at an eighth-grade dance in Edinboro, Pa.; Luke Woodham, who murdered his [mother] and [two] classmates in Pearl, Miss.; and Columbine killers Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.

Christian parents should think twice before allowing such music into their homes, be it through 45s or iTunes or any successor format. The distribution of so much of the sin to which our children are exposed is out of our control, but their music collection is one thing among many that parents can control.

For the sake of our children, we'd better find the courage to do that. The modern music industry, and holiday gift-giving 2015, are the perfect places to start.

NAMB's vital state partners

This is the time of year in our Southern Baptist family when our state Baptist convention partners gather for their annual meetings. I have enjoyed being a part of several of these events this year, which always provide a chance to hear about how God is working through our churches and partnerships in North America.

It is also a great time to express my gratitude for the partnership we have with our conventions and to remind Southern Baptists that much of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) ministry work flows through, and in cooperation with, these partners. Here are some highlights of how these partnerships take place:

■ NAMB has strategic cooperation agreements and cooperative budgets with our state convention partners. These are clearer, more concise and more effective than ever before, and our funding is more strategic.

■ About \$38 million of NAMB's 2014-2015 budget was directed to state conventions, with the majority of that going to non-South states. Our strategic cooperation agreements require that the majority of this funding is to be spent on church plants, evangelism, or church revitalization. We still also help provide certain convention staff positions and church planting catalysts.

■ The leaders of state Baptist conventions in the South have played a vital role in helping us shift more of NAMB's funding to non-South areas. NAMB had been spending more than \$10 million annually in South states where the overwhelming amount of Southern Baptist Convention resources already exist. Now, South leaders have allowed us to move to an annual grant of \$300,000 for each of their states. Again, these funds are to be used on church planting, evangelism, and church revitalization. This is allowing us to put an additional six million dollars annually in non-South areas to increase the church planting capacity.

■ We now have a 100% funding plan model for non-South state convention partners. In the past, NAMB has required these conventions to match



Guest opinion
with Kevin Ezell

a portion of the funds we sent, even if we provided 85%, 90%, or even 95% of their funding. However, state partners often could not provide their portion. This left money on the table year after year. Southern Baptists don't give sacrificially so that we can leave money unspent. Two years ago we began offering non-South state convention partners a 100% plan which limits spending on infrastructure and it places a maximum amount of funding on the field for church planting and evangelism. All but one of our non-South state partners are on board or are in the process of adopting this plan. By the way, the 100% plan would not have been possible without the sacrifices made by the leaders of our South convention states.

■ More NAMB funding is going to church planting than ever before, and this helps state conventions. In 2011, NAMB spent 18.1% of its budget on church planting. Today it is 53.9%. Of course, the top priority for these new churches is reaching people for Christ, but as these church plants grow and strengthen, they contribute more through the Cooperative Program and in other ways, benefiting the state Baptist convention where they are located and the Southern Baptist Convention family at large.

We don't partner with state conventions in every area of their work. This shouldn't be a surprise, but it also shouldn't be an emphasis. Instead, I want to celebrate our partnerships and aim more of our efforts toward serving pastors, strengthening the church, and reaching people for Christ.

Ezell is president of NAMB, located in Alpharetta, Ga. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.

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WORKING TOGETHER — Chris Gustafson and his sons Joshua (center) and Andrew show their handiwork at The Manger Build event for dads and their children at Eastern Heights Church in Jeffersonville, Ind. The elder Gustafson is the church's pastor. (BP photo)

Manger building ministry a hit with Indiana churches

JEFFERSONVILLE, Ind. (BP) — Long before Thanksgiving and even Halloween, Eastern Heights Church in Jeffersonville, Ind., was getting ready for Christmas. For the third consecutive year, the Southern Baptist church is participating in The Manger Build, a project to help men keep Christ in front of their families at Christmas.

It's a day of excitement as fathers and children gather to build a life-size wooden manger to take home or give to a neighbor as a reminder of the reason for the season, said Patrick Lynch, associate pastor at the church in southern Indiana.

"When everyone gets together in the foyer area, it's 30 hammers going at once," said Lynch, who directs the event. "It's overwhelmingly loud and kids and dads are getting together. The moment they grab their kits, that's when the fun starts."

The Manger Build was designed by Mike Young, founder of Noble Warriors, a men's ministry based in Midlothian, Va., near Richmond. It started more than a decade ago as a hobby. Formerly employed in his family's construction business, Young gathered his four children in their garage to look for materials they could use to build a manger.

After organizing Noble Warriors in 2005, Young said he wondered if other men would be interested in participating if he cut the wood.

"We came up with the design we use now," said Young, a member of Parkway Church in Moseley, Va. "I put out an email to my network and 21

families showed up to build one at a United Methodist church in our community.

"The guys loved it. From the first experience until now, every church that does this says it's loud and a little chaotic, but the photos are always the same — dads on the floor with hammer and nails, coaching kids, and the kids are excited."

Noble Warriors didn't move its Manger Build kit into the marketplace until 2013. Over the past two years, 200 churches in 32 states have participated, including a number of Southern Baptist congregations.

Beyond its Christmas focus, the overarching vision of The Manger Build is to help churches lead men toward long-term discipleship and spiritual leadership in their families throughout the year.

At Eastern Heights Church, 15 mangers were assembled last year. Attendees included a couple of grandfathers and volunteer men for children of single mothers, Lynch said.

"What we like about it is it's such an easy set-up," Lynch said. "The dads win out as a hero and it's a quick clean-up afterwards. It's the perfect project for dads. We usually have a sample made and it ends up in the children's ministry department and on stage Christmas Eve."

When Bethel Church in Yorktown, Va., organized its first build last year, project coordinator Joe Blanchard thought 30 families might show up. Instead, the church wound up with 77 fathers, 150 children and 22 coaches who helped where needed.

The sign-up proved so successful that Noble Warriors sent a video crew to record the festivities, which can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/noble-warriors/the-bethel-story>.

"I'm a detail person," said Blanchard, a general contractor and longtime Bethel Church member. "I went by the book 95% of the time. The day of the event I was sitting back, twiddling my thumbs because my work was done."

Blanchard said he started two months ahead of time, first praying about who to include on the six-member team to implement the build. The church learned about it through senior pastor Doug Echols, who had participated in The Manger Build while at another church.

Blanchard already had plenty of experience in hands-on missions. He served as World Changers' construction coordinator in Norfolk, Va., from 2010-12, and leads a Bethel Church ministry that periodically fixes up homes in the Yorktown area.

Last summer, Blanchard led a 23-member crew to Vermont to help renovate dormitory rooms for Northeastern Baptist College in Bennington.

Not surprisingly, missions was uppermost in his mind when members discussed whether to extend invitations to people outside the church for The Manger Build. "If we're going to do a ministry thing, I want to do it outside the church," Blanchard said. "We had guys signing up and telling guys at work about it. Thirty-three percent of the fathers who came weren't part of our church."

Kim: Asian American churches vital to SBC

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Asian American pastors increasingly have a place in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), noted Paul Kim, Asian American relations consultant for the SBC's Executive Committee in Nashville, at a recent A2CP2 (Asian American Church Planting/Cooperative Program) conference at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth.

During the A2CP2 conference for Southwestern Seminary's Asian American students and professors, Kim underscored the importance of developing leaders in preparation for next-generation discipleship and church planting, and he called on Asian American pastors to participate actively in advancing the Kingdom of God through the SBC.

"You are called to change this society, this community," he said. With more Asian Americans now serving in leadership positions in the SBC, "there is more room for you to be involved in Southern Baptist life, Southern Baptist ministry and Southern Baptist work."

Kim emphasized that Southwestern Seminary students are among those God has called to become key leaders for the future. "You have a great responsibility from God. God has assigned you to be prepared and equipped to preach the Word," he said, urging conference attendees to use their time at Southwestern Seminary to learn as much as they can about discipleship, church planting and ministry.

When planting new churches after graduating from the seminary, some pastors may get discouraged by the small size and slow growth of their congregations, said Kim, a Southwestern Seminary trustee. "The key

is not size, but the measure of faith," he pointed out.

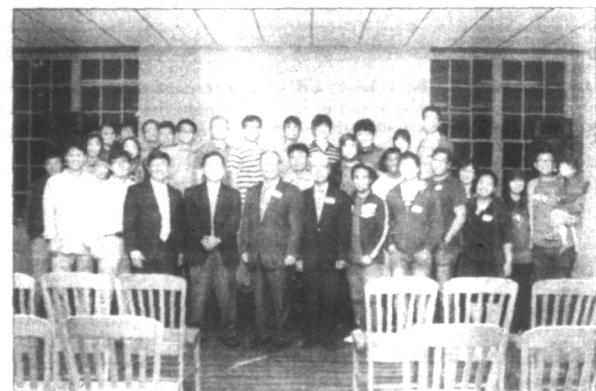
The large majority of Southern Baptist churches in the United States are small churches with less than 250 members, Kim said. Numbers do not determine influence, he stated, because small churches' gifts account for the greatest contribution to the Cooperative Program which funds Southern Baptist missions and ministry nationally and internationally.

Church growth should be measured by the quality of godly relationships, he said. "It's not about the number. It's about people's life relationships with God and with one another. The Bible tells us to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and strength, and to love your neighbors."

"The church is the family of God, and numbers do not determine the love and care we have for each other."

Asian American family culture can help the church planting process, Kim added. "We have a familial concept in church planting," he said. Recounting his own longstanding church planting ministry as an example, Kim described a model of church planting in which the sponsoring parent church continually takes care of newly planted churches with spiritual mentorship and financial support.

Kim offered as an example of this model, Antioch Church in Cambridge, Mass. (previously Berkland Church), which he planted and pastored for 30 years. Antioch Church has planted 13 churches in the United States and 13 churches overseas in countries such as Japan, China, Russia, and Turkey — and the Antioch Church congregation continues to nurture them, Kim said.



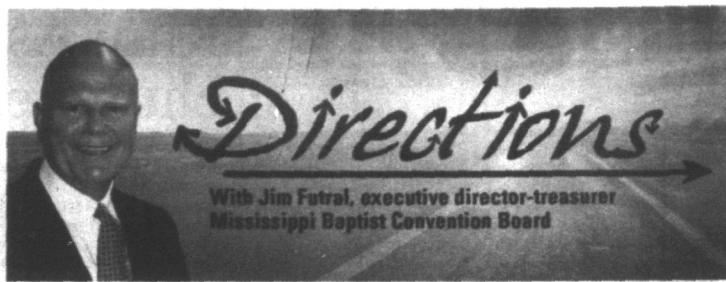
BROTHERS IN CHRIST — Paul Kim (front row, fifth from left), Asian American relations consultant for the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, was the featured speaker at a recent A2CP2 (Asian American Church Planting/Cooperative Program) conference at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth. (BP photo courtesy of Southwestern Seminary)

You don't have to drive too far until you will probably see some orange cones in the road and on the side of the road. I see them everywhere, all the time. Not thirty yards from my house, there are several that are on both sides of the road. They have been there for months and it does not appear as though the contractor is wrapping up, correcting, and finishing the work on the problem that was there. Whoever designed and started manufacturing orange cones and barrels is probably pretty well fixed today.

Can you imagine how many of these things exist just in the United States? You'll find them anywhere. It doesn't matter if you're in a big city or a small little village out in the middle of nowhere. They've got some orange cones or barrels either on display or ready to be used, and it's easy to understand why there are so many of them when you realize what they're doing there. The orange cones are alerting us, announcing to us that there is a problem just ahead and you would be wise to slow down, maybe even stop, as you go by or through that area.

Sometimes the cones will be lined up so that it will redirect you from one road to another or take you on a detour in a different direction, but nearly always by their very nature they are a warning that something is not normal and that you may not need to be going to the same place or in the same direction that you had planned.

It might be helpful if we recognize that in His Word, God puts some orange cone kind of warnings in our



Directions

With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Orange Cones on the Road of Life

pathway. They are called the Ten Commandments. In most places today — especially in public areas — they're not allowed to be shown and some people would even declare that they are not relevant thinking and that there are no absolutes about truth nor God nor the actions in our lives. Here is the undeniable fact: If you see one of the orange cone commandments and you choose to ignore it or defy it and drive on, you will soon find that when you get yourself put back together the orange cone was there for a reason and the reason was to help you and to guide you and bless you and keep you from going off in that ditch.

God did not give us the Ten Commandments to harm us, but to keep us

from being harmed. He wasn't trying to rob us of enjoyment in life but to keep us on a path that would bring joy to our lives. A student who finds himself in a tight spot in school, or a business person with his back against the wall in some deal, or any of us coming to the reality of a wrong decision in life may think about the easy way out and just tell a lie. Somehow, wonderfully, God manages to place an orange cone right there in front of us that says, "Don't go there. Don't tell an untruth regardless of how convenient it might be and how much it may save you from embarrassment."

When God says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exod. 20:14), He does so for our good. Regardless of the circumstances or who is involved, you

cannot justify nor rationalize nor find a better life by going past God's warning into a wrong relationship.

In the Old Testament you can watch and oftentimes see when people cross over and ignore the orange cones of life. You could even raise an accusing finger and say, "There you go, crossing the lines and going outside the bounds," but in the New Testament Jesus brought a new view of the warnings to help us understand that they are not just external, they're internal.

One by one throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus helps us to understand that it is not just going out and with our bare hands killing someone, but that we can live with such hate in our hearts that we commit murder and cross over the spiritual lines, ignoring the orange cone warnings of life. Others may not see it, but we know it.

Knowing that God has a warning system in place — an orange cone ministry — what are we to do? Three quick thoughts as you travel the road today.

■ **Assess.** Watch for the warnings that God brings to your sight and to your heart.

■ **Avoid.** Don't go there. Don't say that. Don't pursue that. Avoid the pitfall.

■ **Adjust.** Adjust your direction, speed, and plans so that you can go another direction. Proverbs 3:6 says, "And he shall direct thy paths." He will, so watch carefully for the orange cones on your roadway.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

College News



The WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY forensics team, under the direction of Assistant Professor of Communication Jennifer Talbert, placed first overall and first in individual events at the recent Red River Swing Tournament at Louisiana State University in Shreveport.



(AT LEFT) MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE'S Graduate School commencement Dec. 18 will feature 2nd District U.S. Representative Bennie Thompson as the keynote speaker. Ceremonies at the A.E. Wood Coliseum will begin at 7 p.m. About 273 MC students will receive graduate or law school diplomas. (AT RIGHT) MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE'S Counseling Services director, Morgan Bryant, received the Counselor of the Year award from the Mississippi Licensed Professional Counselors Association in a meeting in Biloxi in early November. Holding two degrees from Mississippi State University and a doctorate in counselor education from the University of Mississippi, the Meridian native joined the Mississippi College center in July 2011. Last year, the program headquartered in Alumni Hall served 400 students on the Clinton campus.

BIBLIOCRYPT

C KNU LWGGCKMGNKX B PBQN HKXW

TWH, XACX TN SWQN WKN CKWXANZ;

CE B ACQN SWQNM TWH, XACX TN

CSEW SWQN WKN CKWXANZ.

DWAK XABZXNNK: XABZXT-OWHZ

Clue: S = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 9:23

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Vols eager to return to Kenya after baptisms



IN THE SPIRIT — Pastor Emmanuel Nangoria (right), an unidentified man, and guests from America worship with the congregation of Bethel Church in Chemoril, West Pokot County, Kenya. Singing in the Pokot area often involves a lot of jumping. (BP photo)

WEST POKOT, Kenya (BP) — Baptist volunteers from Washington state developed a partnership with Kenyan students and saw 28 people baptized when they traveled out of North America for the first time to share the Gospel with an unreached people group in sub-Saharan Africa.

"Looking back, it was just — it was awesome!" said Kevin Melone, one of the volunteers. "It was physically challenging. It was mentally challenging. Man, it was awesome how God just gave us the strength to do it."

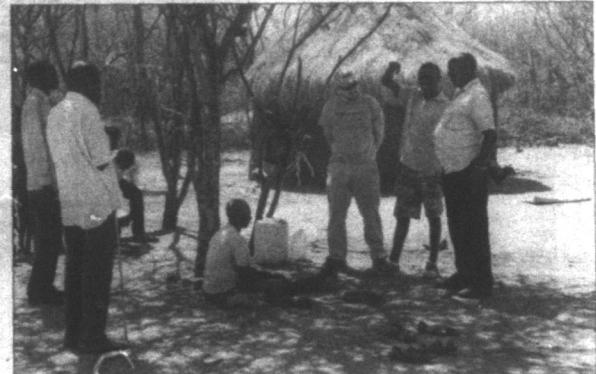
Melone traveled earlier this year with David Wells, associate pastor of Terrace Heights Church in Yakima, Wa., to partner with Chad Pumelly, former church member and the International Mission Board (IMB) student ministry leader in Nairobi, Kenya.

Pumelly invited the pair over to share Christ in West Pokot, plant new churches, encourage the four existing pastors in the region, and help train students from the University of Nairobi who are catching the vision for church planting among unreached people groups in Africa.

"I think the ultimate goal of the trip was to just really be hands-on funders and catalysts and evangelists all in one," Wells said.

In five days the team of volunteers and students saw 15 people saved and 28 baptized. Melone, who works with The River Church, a small church plant in Moxee, Wa., was overwhelmed to see the river baptisms.

"The closest thing I could picture would be people lining up to John the Baptist at the river to be baptized. It was awesome! It was raw and just great to see, like my whole church getting baptized at once," he said.



GOSPEL SHARED — Washington state volunteer Kevin Melone (third from right), a member of The River Church in Moxee, Wa.; University of Nairobi student George "Odidi" Odhiambo (second from right); and pastor Hudson Ambaka (right) share the Creation to Christ story with a woman named Chepokuo (seated, center) while others listen at her home about a 45-minute walk from Bethel Church. (BP photo)

Within the last year, 120 people have come to Christ and four churches have been planted. Wells and Melone hope to help bring the Nairobi students alongside the work as missionaries-in-training.

"We are just one step in that process of evangelizing and getting to see God work by giving the students from University of Nairobi the opportunity to both translate and specifically share the Gospel," said Wells, who saw firsthand how monies raised for his and Melone's trip were also used to give the students the opportunity to participate.

Current church leaders in West Pokot are praying for a good partnership between Southern Baptist volunteers and students like the one attained on this trip. Melone noted he is eager to go home and cast the vision for his church.

"I would like to return [to Kenya], and I don't want to return alone," Melone said. "I think this would be a great opportunity for our church to, over several years, do mission trips like this."

Pray

■ Pray for the Washington churches involved in the mission trip to follow God's leading in future partnerships with Chad and Kenyan students.

■ Pray students in Nairobi will respond to the Gospel and catch the vision to take the Gospel to the unreached people groups of Africa.

■ Pray for the four existing pastors in West Pokot to continue in wise leadership and a passion for their people.

Pro-family prof under fire at California university

NORTHRIDGE, Calif. (BP) — A tenured Southern Baptist professor at a university in California could face dismissal for allegedly "retaliating" against a student who complained about his support for traditional marriage.

"If I were to use legal terms — even though this is not a legal proceeding — I've been convicted but not sentenced," said Robert Oscar Lopez, an associate professor of English and classics at California State University-Northridge (CSUN). "They said that I was guilty of retaliation, which is a serious charge in academia."

If found guilty, Lopez could be demoted, suspended without pay, or dismissed.

In June, Lopez learned university officials had spent eight

months investigating him after students complained about being exposed to a "hostile learning environment" during a 2014 optional conference organized by Lopez at the school's Reagan Library.

The conference, called Bonds That Matter, emphasized the importance for children of having both a mother and a father.

CSUN found no fault with Lopez during its investigation into complaints about the conference's supposedly "anti-gay" and "anti-female" agenda. However, in October the university charged Lopez with "retaliating" against a student who brought complaints about him to the administration.

Among the charges is that he prevented the student from re-



LOPEZ

ceiving an award to which she allegedly was entitled, *The Daily Signal* reported.

Lopez contests this charge. The student received an "A" in his class, according to *The Daily Signal*, and Lopez said the allegations against him are based upon undocumented testimony of the student. The administration, he added, declined to consider emails and other documentation that seemed to corroborate his side of the story.

Charles S. LiMandri, president and chief counsel of the Freedom of Conscience Defense Fund in Rancho Santa Fe, Ca., wrote in a letter to CSUN Provost Yi Li that Lopez neither retaliated against students nor interfered with their attempts to bring complaints before CSUN's Office of Equity and Diversity.

"Under these circumstances, we have no choice but to con-

clude that the disposition of this investigation is a purely political and ideological attack on Dr. Lopez for holding — and exposing students to — ideas about children's rights [to a mother and father] which are apparently unpopular," LiMandri wrote.

CSUN spokesperson Carmen Chandler defended the university's ruling against Lopez. The university, she told *The Daily Signal*, "is fully committed to upholding academic freedom and free speech, as well as the right of our students to bring forth concerns. Any investigation resulting from student complaints follows established CSUN protocol and is conducted on the basis of determining whether or not there has been a violation of university policy."

A member of a Chinese Southern Baptist congregation, Lopez was raised by two lesbians and

identified as bisexual as a teenager. He came to faith in Christ in 2008. He is married and the father of two children.

Lopez has been an outspoken advocate for the traditional, biblical definition of marriage and the right of children to have both a mother and a father. He filed an amicus brief earlier this year with the U.S. Supreme Court, urging justices not to redefine marriage to include same-sex couples.

The value of traditional marriage for children, Lopez said, literally was "written in stone" in the 10 Commandments' admonition to "honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12).

"That really means that you have to organize your time in this life around sexual difference and around a vision of family and a debt to your origins which respects both motherhood and fatherhood," he said.



NO ROOM — Refugee camps in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon are at capacity, leaving many refugees with insufficient shelter. With no way to return home and nowhere else to go, thousands are left to sleep in makeshift quarters on the streets. (BP photo)

Ten facts about refugees ensnared in current crisis

CENTRAL ASIA (BP) — Millions of people across Central Asia have crossed borders to escape war, persecution, and violence. While Southern Baptists continue to respond, many refugees cling to hope that wanes with each passing day.

The following is a list of 10 realities about refugees that many people in the U.S. may not yet realize. Also, learn ways to pray and how Baptist Global Response (BGR) is helping meet needs.

■ Children are suffering. Half of Syrian refugees are under the age of 18. Three out of four children have lost a loved one because of the war and desperately need crisis counselors. Volunteers who can organize education, English, art, or sports camps play a vital role in ministering to children, many of whom are not enrolled in any structured school program.

■ Shelter is insufficient. Refugee camps in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon are at capacity. Thousands of refugees are left to sleep on the streets.

■ Winter is approaching. Most refugees flee with only the clothes on their backs and cell phones. Many are unprepared for approaching winter weather.

■ Food is scarce. Refugees who travel across borders often subsist on one meal a day. Provision of food is a critical aspect of refugee relief.

■ Refugees are at risk for exploitation. Crowded housing conditions, which include people living in abandoned buildings, place many at risk of abuse. Pray for God to protect refugees, especially children, from those

who prey on the vulnerable and oppressed.

■ Many refugees are educated. A journalist said he fled his country because he was persecuted for expressing his views on the Internet. Refugees may have been engineers, medical professionals, accountants, educators, or artists in their home countries. There is a wide diversity of professions represented on the refugee highway.

■ Refugees are diverse. Refugees may speak Arabic, Persian, Kurmanji, Sorani, or Urdu. They represent many different people groups: Assyrian, Syrian, Kurdish, Yazidi, Afghani, Persian, or Pakistani. Meeting the needs of so many peoples can be a challenge for relief workers, but it presents an incredible opportunity for sharing the Gospel.

■ The road to freedom is dangerous. Refugees risk their lives when they flee their countries. According to government reports, 30 people drowned near the Greek island of Lesvos in a period of four months, yet local workers estimate the actual number to be more than 250. In total, close to 3,000 people have died crossing the Mediterranean Sea to arrive in Europe.

■ Orphans are at risk. The most vulnerable refugees are unaccompanied minors, many of whom have been out of school for a year or more. Volunteer teams could provide critical support through English, art, science or sports camps for refugee children.

■ Refugees laugh, love, and hurt. Refugees are men, women, and children just like any other man, woman, or child

in the world. Anyone could become a refugee given the right political circumstances.

Pray

Pray for God to give you a heart full of compassion for those who have been forced from their homes and are adrift in the world. Pray the Lord would heal our broken world through Christ, the Prince of Peace. Pray God will bring eternal hope to many refugees through the Gospel message of a heavenly Father, forgiveness through Christ and a home in heaven that will never fade away.

Pray God will execute justice for the weak and the fatherless and deliver them from the hand of the wicked. Pray God will give people the desire, resources and time to walk in obedience as they learn about refugees.

Learn more

Learn more about how Baptist Global Response is responding to refugee needs in places like Syria, Northern Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Greece by going to gobgr.org/projects/project_detail/syria-crisis. For instance, blankets for refugees, which people can help provide for \$10 per blanket, are being distributed through BGR.

Learn more about how individuals or a team can serve groups of refugees in Central Asia through sports or education opportunities for two months or more by emailing francish@gobgr.org, or contact Jeff Palmer at jpalmier@gobgr.org to learn about other opportunities.

Trio asks for finding of genocide against targeted Christians

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. State Department should not exclude Christians as victims if the federal diplomatic agency declares the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria guilty of genocide, Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission President Russell Moore has told Secretary of State John Kerry.

In a Nov. 16 letter, Moore responded to a report the State Department is preparing to categorize the terrorist organization's campaign against Iraq's Yazidi religious sect as genocide — but will not include Christians as targets of genocidal acts.

Moore said in his letter he supports a U.S. declaration that ISIS has committed and continues to commit genocide, but he called for Kerry "to recognize every victim of every community standing in the path of [ISIS]. Let us not be distracted by a quibbling over terminology that falsely distinguishes between victims of equally horrific atrocities."

Irqi and Syrian Christians "have faced mass beheadings, crucifixion, and other atrocities for the crime of following Jesus Christ," Moore wrote. "This is genocide and civilization must declare it so."

A leading human rights advocate in the U.S. House of Representatives and a former member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) also spoke against the expected exclusion of Christians.

Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) said he is shocked and dismayed the Obama administration "would even think to exclude the present day genocide of Christians."

"Ignoring Christians, and the full range of religious and ethnic groups who have been victims of the ISIS genocide, would continue [President Obama's] policy of silence and weak response," Smith said in a Nov. 13 written statement.

Nina Shea, director of the Hudson Institute's Center for Re-

ligious Freedom and a USCIRF commissioner from 1999 - 2012, described Christians' fate at the hands of ISIS forces in a Nov. 13 piece for National Review.

"Christians have been exterminated by the thousands," Shea wrote. "Christian women and girls are vulnerable to sexual enslavement. Many of their clergy have been assassinated and their churches and ancient monasteries demolished or desecrated. They have been systematically stripped of all their wealth, and those too elderly or sick to flee ISIS-controlled territory" have been forced to convert to Islam or been killed.

Moore, Smith, and Shea were responding to a Nov. 12 article by investigative reporter Michael Isikoff of Yahoo News, who reported the State Department is preparing to label ISIS' onslaught against the Yazidis in Iraq as genocide. A 1948 United Nations treaty says genocide includes the commission of such acts as murder with the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, or religious group."

State Department officials contend attacks on Christians and minorities other than the Yazidis appear to fall short of the standard established in the genocide treaty, Isikoff reported.

The naming of victims of genocide "is not an academic matter," Shea said. "A genocide designation would have significant policy implications for American efforts to restore property and lands taken from the minority groups and for offers of aid, asylum, and other protections to such victims."

In addition, she wrote, it would mean the United States and other countries, under the genocide treaty, "would not be bound to act to suppress or even prevent the genocide of these Christians."

Moore has joined others in urging Obama and Congress to designate ISIS in violation of the genocide treaty.

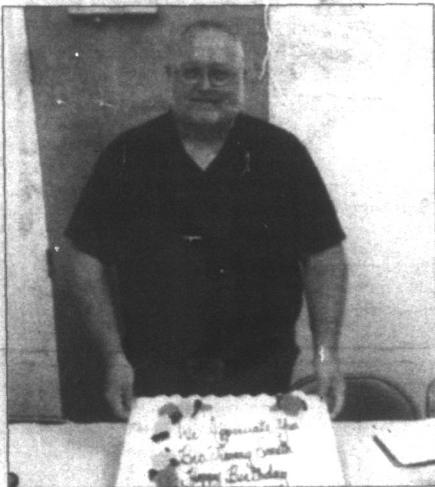


GENOCIDE VICTIMS? — Terrorists affiliated with the Muslim extremist group ISIS prepare to execute a group of Coptic Christians who refused to renounce their faith and convert to Islam. (Unattributed photo)

Just for the Record



FIRST CHURCH, MAGNOLIA, licensed James Norris to the ministry Nov. 8. Shown are Keith Tamor, Norris, his wife Lauren, and pastor Gene Richards.



SILVER CREEK CHURCH, MCCOMB, held a pastor appreciation celebration for Jimmy Smith.



CROSS ROADS CHURCH, PELAHATCHIE, ordained Steve Massey as deacon Aug. 30. Shown are pastor John Vaughn and Massey.

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ZION HILL CHURCH, AMITE CO., sponsored a World Crafts showing on Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer. Presenters were Brenda Wilson, Ann Rials, and Linda Sterling.



BLUFF SPRINGS CHURCH presented Mary Fortenberry (left) with framed artwork upon her retirement as treasurer Oct. 31. Sharon Anderson proceeded her in the position.



The Area IV GA Mission Madness was held Nov. 7 at **FIRST CHURCH, MATHISTON**, with 136 girls from 10 counties attending. Missionaries from Clinton and Oklahoma shared their experiences.

In other Church News:

► **Highland Church, Laurel**, is hosting Christmas in the Highlands Dec. 11-13. Fri., Sun., 6 p.m., free performances. Sat., 5 p.m., dinner theater. Tickets, \$25. For tickets and more information, call (601) 428-8493. Reserved seating.

► **Bethlehem Church, Morton**, is hosting Ac-teens Day Dec. 5, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Kay Bennett, guest speaker. Lunch provided; RSVP by Nov. 27 to nichcraig@yahoo.com or call (601) 732-8144. Participants

should bring either packs of Vienna sausages, peanut butter crackers, individually wrapped snack items, or packs of men's socks.

► **High Hill Church, Neshoba County**, is hosting a 5th Sunday night singing Nov. 29, 6 p.m., featuring Servants Quartet. Don Cook, pastor; Mike Barker, music leader.

► The senior citizens group of **Monticello Church, Monticello**, was entertained Nov. 12 by Michael Harris, who performed his award-winning program, Memories.

Answered prayer leads to Gospel shared in Vietnam

FREDERICKSBURG, Va. (BP)

— The jet lag was wearing off for Jerry and Mary Logan. They were ready to explore the unknown territory of Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam with their friends Chum and Coi Truong.

Since fleeing Vietnam as refugees in 1979, the Truongs have made numerous trips back but the trip from Fredericksburg, Va., to Vietnam in July 2015 was different. Not only were their American friends joining them, but this was their first time to return as believers in Jesus Christ.

Before leaving on the trip, Chum said he didn't know how his family would react to the news that he and Coi had become Christians. He said it might take some time for them to consider the Gospel, but the uncertainty didn't stop him from speaking boldly to family members and neighbors in two villages.

"I want you to know that I have read the Bible and I believe that it is true," Chum told family members who gathered to hear him. "I know that there is only one way to heaven and that's through Jesus."

For the Logans, listening to Chum and Coi share their newfound faith with their family in Vietnam was an answer to many prayers.

Friendship blooms

Though they recently went to Vietnam, Mary points out that this journey really began 35 years ago when the church she attended at the time helped the Truongs, who were refugees, relocate to the U.S.

"That's when Coi, Chum, and I became friends," said Mary, who now is a member of Spotswood Church with her husband. "Our children were close to the same age and they were able to play together. Coi would come to my house and make egg rolls, which

we loved. We just developed a great relationship."

When Coi opened a beauty salon, Mary started going regularly. To Mary, this was one more way to stay involved in Coi's life, and their friendship grew. Today they enjoy the easy kind of relationship where Coi can pick the onions off Mary's salad or tease her because she doesn't like hairspray.

When someone says that they are good friends, Coi is quick to correct, "We are best friends."

For many years, Mary assumed that Coi and Chum were believers because they often came to church. When Coi said they weren't Christians, Mary became burdened for her friends. "From then on, my goal was to reach out to my friend and her husband with the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ," Mary said.

She started praying, asking God to do something great for His Kingdom and let her be a part of it. That's what He chose to do, Mary pointed out.

New church

Mary read a couple of books that encouraged her. One was Radical, by International Mission Board (IMB) President David Platt. Wanting to best know how to witness in the Vietnamese community of Fredericksburg, she called IMB.

Minh Ha Nguyen, a manager in IMB's research department, suggested Mary start a Bible study group among Vietnamese in a home because that was proving to be an effective way to multiply the Gospel among unreached people in the U.S. When Mary asked Coi if she would be interested in studying the Bible she immediately agreed, and they made plans to meet weekly in Coi's home.

"About that time, some friends walked in that she knew

who were Christians, other Vietnamese friends," Mary noted. "I asked if they would like to join our group if we started a Bible study, and they agreed."

The group began with the Logans and two Vietnamese couples. In time it grew as Coi and Chum invited their friends. Vietnamese teenagers who were Christians interpreted Bible stories told by Jerry and Mary.

"Our hearts knew this was God's will, and that He would accomplish His purposes through our obedience. We had no idea what to do or how to do it but trusted God to do through us what we could not do on our own," Mary said.

Both Truongs were interested in reading the Bible but were hesitant to make a decision to surrender to Christ. The faithful witness of friends led Coi to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior in March 2014.

"She was just a brand new creature in Christ," Mary recalled. "She wanted to share her faith, she was so bold and she would just tell people."

Chum took longer to accept the Gospel, though he would stay up at night reading through the books of the Bible. He said he wanted to know for sure that it was truth. He had read the Bible for himself, studied it in a group where he could discuss it in Vietnamese, and spent time with Christian friends.

In February 2015, Chum declared he was changed and knew that Jesus is the only way to heaven.

Gospel to Vietnam

Soon after making their decisions to follow Christ, Coi and Chum began to share with family and friends in Vietnam. Over a video cell phone call after Bible



SHARING CHRIST — Mary Logan, a member of Spotswood Church in Fredericksburg, Va., presents the Plan of Salvation through an interpreter to Chum Truong's family, who gathered to listen in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. (BP photo courtesy of International Mission Board)

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study one night, Coi helped lead her brother to the Lord. Already they witnessed the Gospel reaching their home country.

As summer 2015 approached, Chum and Coi invited the Logans to travel with them to Vietnam. Jerry and Mary immediately encouraged them to make plans to share their faith with family, and agreed they would be a part of that effort.

Mary found clips from The JESUS Film in Vietnamese that she downloaded to a computer. They practiced sharing the Gospel and coached Chum and Coi on how to share their testimonies.

For Chum and Coi, the trip was about watching God move in the lives of their friends and spread His Word to unreached peoples of Southeast Asia. For Mary, this was another answer to her continued prayer for God to do something great in His Kingdom.

"If we pray fervently and consistently for God to give us direction that many might come to know Him through us, He will make our path clear," Mary said. "He shows His power as we step into the unknown with only faith to uphold us. We then experience the working of the Holy Spirit in us. To God be the glory!"

GuideStone's Mission:Dignity helps needy retirees



JOHNNY AND KATHIE MANSELL

DALLAS (BP and local reports) — Kathie knew at age 13 she would be a pastor's wife one day. It just seemed natural since she grew up in Brazil as a missionary kid and grandkid. It was at Hardin-Simmons University in Texas that Kathie met Johnny. They married in December 1969.

Their wedding would be the foundation for a long marriage and fruitful ministry together. The Mansells would lean into God's promises over the next four decades of pastoral ministry in New Mexico and Texas, but especially when health issues resulted in an early retirement in 2012.

On the advice of a friend, Johnny had opted out of Social Security when he began ministry. As the

Mansells later discovered, opting out of Social Security is generally not recommended by most financial experts.

Medical bills ate up all of the Mansells' retirement savings. That just left Kathie's teacher's pension to meet their monthly expenses. When the Mansells' money ran out, Mission:Dignity stepped in. The GuideStone Financial Resources ministry to pastors and their widows in need extended a monthly grant to the Mansells and also paid for some much-needed dental work they would never have been able to afford.

GuideStone, headquartered in Dallas, is Southern Baptists' financial and benefit agency and is guided by Christian values.

"We'd just like to say what a blessing Mission:Dignity is in our lives," Johnny said. "We've faced some very difficult times with expenses related to health issues the last several years. It's made such a difference because it's enabled us to purchase our medications. We've had to make some choices in the past to pay for food, utilities, or medicine, and now we're able to take care of these expenses thanks to Mission:Dignity."

Kathie added, "It has given peace of mind because we were always wondering, 'Next month, how are we going to do this?' We'd have to go to God in prayer and ask for forgiveness for the anxiety about it all, but He always came through every month to help us."

First Person: From one pastor's wife to another

Jessica Pigg
respondent

astors',
s, do you
wake up
ministry to
yourself,
my? Why
I sign up
this?
f we were
honest
in our
es, we would say that at some
or another, we have asked
"why" questions in ministry.



PIGG

Typically, we come to the answer that we believe God has a plan and purpose for us in this specific ministry (Romans 8:28). Ministry is tough, but being in the will of God makes the reward well worth it.

Thrive, flourish

We may not like where our lives have been planted. God may have called you away from everything you define as comfortable. However, until He replants us in a different mission field, we are to thrive and flourish where we

MS POSITIONS

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COPIAH COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION SEEKING PART-TIME ASSOCIATION MISSION DIRECTOR. Please send resumes to: Mr. Larry Papiz, Copiah County Baptist Association, P.O. Box 230, Hazlehurst MS 39083.

are — not just survive. How do we flourish? Get involved with the people around you. Meet business owners in the community, go to sports games at your local schools, volunteer at the community pregnancy center, etc. Don't withdraw. Get involved.

Love the unlovable

Let's be honest. Some people are hard to love. They may have wounded us. They may have said something hurtful about our husband as a pastor. They may have turned their backs on the church. They may be a constant troublemaker or gossip. Surprise them by loving them (Matthew 5:44).

Speak truth in love

This phrase sounds simple, right? We often say it so flippantly, almost like it comes as second nature to us. It is hard to speak truth in love to someone who has hurt you or is a constant critic of your husband. However, that is what we are called to do (Ephesians 4:15). In each instance, we must control the desires of our flesh and choose godliness with our words.

Grow in criticism

Criticism is unavoidable, and stings to the core. Critical words are hard to hear and they break our hearts. However, at times, there is a partial truth in what is being said. You must take to Scripture the words being said and evaluate whether they have any credence. You must allow the words to transform you and

teach you to grow in your knowledge of God's Word. Let the criticism help you grow.

Forsake bitterness

After being hurt or betrayed, some ministry wives retreat and take on the attitude, "I will never do that again," or "I will never allow myself to make a friend in the church again." To be honest, I have declared these bold statements before. Very early in ministry, I allowed a temporary feeling to dictate to whom I ministered and to whom I wanted to ignore. Allow yourself to be vulnerable. It is in those moments of vulnerability that God has used me to minister to women the most.

Choose forgiveness

In ministry, wounds will come. Some are deep and some are shallow. Often, our hearts want to keep score. Keeping a scorecard is heading down a slippery slope. Instead of walking around with bitterness and resentment, choose forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-35). The blood of Jesus demands our hearts to be broken and to forgive those who have wronged us or our husbands.

Servant's heart

There is something humbling about serving the local church. Sadly, many church members do not expect the pastor's wife to lift a finger or serve selflessly. One of my favorite ways to serve the church is to serve in unexpected

areas: help the janitor clean the bathrooms once a month, volunteer to fold the bulletins, be the door greeter on a Sunday morning, or help in the parking lot with an umbrella when it is raining (Matthew 23:11).

Love your husband

Choose to love your husband each and every day. Early on in ministry, I was completely broken by a situation concerning a church staff member. The wife of this staff member was extremely vocal regarding the fact that she hated being a ministry wife and what that life entailed for her and her children. She despised her husband for answering God's call to ministry and it greatly affected the attitude of our church members.

I made a choice in that moment that I would love my husband and pray bold prayers for him. When God called my husband to ministry, He called me too. God called me to be my husband's encourager, prayer warrior, and helper (Genesis 2:18).

I don't know what you're facing in your ministry, but I hope these words help with those tough mornings and give you some practical, biblical truth for the tough days ahead.

Pigg is the director of women's ministry at First Church Immaculate in southwest Florida, where her husband Timothy is senior pastor. Her commentary appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.

CLASSIFIEDS

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BARBIE

cont. from p. 1

overcame same sex attraction as a young adult.

"I'm very concerned by this push to feminize boys. The commercial normalizes and celebrates gender confusion — boys acting and talking like girls."

Bob Stith, a Southern Baptist who specializes in gender issues and founded Family and Gender Issues Ministries in Southlake, Texas, believes parents should not buy their sons toys that are clearly feminine in nature.

"Male children can certainly be drawn to things that are considered more feminine. They may be more artistically inclined, more sensitive. This is not a bad thing," said Stith, who formerly served as the gender issues strategist for the Southern Baptist Convention. "The danger is when we as a culture encourage that child to pursue a feminine identity."

Young Rodriguez goes by the stage name Taylor Gregory while living with his mother Renee for eight months each year in Los Angeles, where the pair seeks work for him in the entertainment industry, according to a November 18 article by Justin Mitchell in the Biloxi-based Sun Herald newspaper.

Renee, a former teacher, homeschooled Taylor. The rest of the family — Taylor's father

and two siblings — live year-round in Biloxi, Mitchell wrote.

The Sun Herald article quoted Pandora Boxx, a drag queen and comedian from

Rochester, N.Y., as posting on social media, "This almost made me cry! I used to play with my sister's Barbies and felt such shame afterward. I'm so glad we can just let kids be kids. Thank you for this! Boys like dolls too!"

Not so fast, said Johnston. Children have to be taught to grow into the men and women

God intended without the gender confusion brought on by depictions in such as the Barbie advertisement, he noted.

"Churches and families can be a huge factor in teaching God's design for humanity, relationships, and marriage," Johnston said. "God made us male and female in His own image, and blurring those distinctions distorts God's image in us."

Stith said it is more important than ever for churches to learn how to encourage children to accept their biological gender identity. He referenced a previous Baptist Press first-person article on gender identity that offers parenting tips for connecting with sensitive boys. The article can be found at bpnews.net/34779/firstperson-parenting-the-sensitive-soul.

"After all is said and done, it still comes down to the truth that God created them male and female. Regardless of what culture says and does we must never compromise on that truth," Stith said.



JOHNSTON



STITH

Couple completes impressive trek for missions, NAMB

CLEVELAND, Tenn. (BP) — Army veteran Tom Cawood set out in the heat of August to ride his bike from San Diego, Ca., to St. Augustine, Fl. Along the way, he and wife Pat helped raise awareness for missions and the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

When most of his contemporaries are slowing down, Cawood, 81, gives the impression of gaining speed. His life motto is, "Life is like water skiing. If you slow down, you go down."

Cawood, followed by his wife in a recreational vehicle, first began planning the coast-to-coast journey in April.

This is not the Tennessee native's first adventure, or the first time he has faced a formidable challenge. As a young child, Cawood fell out of a window and broke his back. While recovering, he contracted tuberculosis in the hospital. Doctors said he would not live past age 20. Cawood defeated the odds and went on to serve in the U.S. Army for two years stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, as an electronic technician for guided missiles.

"We bleed red, white, and blue," Cawood said of his family military heritage. "My wife's father was in the Navy [for nearly 30 years] and I was in the Army. We have a son serving in Germany. We lost our Marine son in 2008 in an auto accident. We have a granddaughter who served in the Navy and a grandson in the Army."

Cawood became a Christian at age 14 and went on to serve in various ministries. "I have been a Sunday School teacher, a deacon, a department supervisor, and, well, just about everything else," he said. He also worked for a sheriff's department and was asked to be the chaplain of the reserve officers.



GEARING UP — Tom (left) and Pat Cawood along with their dog Shaina prepare for their 3,000-mile, cross-country fundraising bike ride. Tom, 81, a U.S. Army veteran, used the trip to highlight the Send North America strategy at stops made at churches on Sundays during the trip. (BP photo courtesy of Legendary Images)

Pat noted, "The God appointments have just been amazing."

The Cawoods, members of First Church in Cleveland, Tenn., planned their trip with the goal of raising money and awareness for three organizations that held a special meaning for them: the Livestrong program through the YMCA, Disabled American Veterans, and the North American Mission Board.

The couple said they wanted to emphasize missions throughout their trip, placing a specific interest in NAMB's work and its Send North America emphasis on planting churches in 50 key cities.

"We were talking to our pastor about how we can tie it all together," Pat said. "Our pastor told us one day, 'Do you realize that you are going to be riding through three of the Send cities, and if you count Atlanta, that's four.'

"This all led us into adopting the Send North America strategy," Pat said.

The Cawoods explored NAMB's website and studied the Send North America strategies, NAMB's farm system, and an overview of the cities they would travel through.

During the Cawoods' trip, they always stopped to rest on Saturday evenings and would find a place to attend church on Sunday mornings. The couple visited various churches where they often were given time to speak to the congregation about their journey.

In Baton Rouge, we were able to look up some of the specific projects for New Orleans and present them," Pat said. "We would just direct people to NAMB and tell them to see where they can be involved."

The Cawoods distributed between 700 - 800 reference cards that shared information

about NAMB. "Who knows how far those have traveled?" Pat wondered aloud.

The Cawoods also picked Livestrong and Disabled American Veterans because of the close ties they've had with the organizations through the years. "We have friends who are disabled American veterans, and so we knew that it was the right path," Tom said.

The Cawoods picked the Livestrong program because of the prevalence and severity of cancer. "Our son had the same cancer that Lance Armstrong had a few years ago, so we became aware of the program then" Pat noted, "Everybody has someone or knows someone who has gone through the trials of dealing with cancer."

A year before the trip, Tom was diagnosed with kidney cancer and had one of his kidneys removed. Prior to Tom's cancer, he was in a severe motorcycle accident at age 74 where he was admitted to an intensive care unit and was on life support for five weeks.

"He should not have survived," Pat said.

The cross-country bicycle trip ended up being far more intense than the Cawoods had planned. There were many days when the temperature was at least 114 degrees. The Cawoods froze wet paper towels and stuck them in Tom's helmet.

"We would start at 3:30 a.m. and ride under the moonlight in order to get miles in before it got too hot," Pat said.

Despite the heat, miles, and exhaustion, Tom remained faithful to the task at hand. "He's just an amazing guy," Pat said, "but we serve an even more amazing God."

The Cawoods reached the finish line on the beaches of St. Augustine on Oct. 14. "While we were out there, we thought the end would never come but here we are," Tom said, recalling that at the hardest parts of his ride he would think of the popular song, One Day At a Time, Sweet Jesus.

"When we reach out and walk with the Lord and we walk in His strength, then there isn't anything we can't do," he said. "It's one step, one pedal, and one breath at a time."

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mcb.org.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

God Provides • Genesis 24:1-17

When did you last surprise God? Surely I jest! Surprise God? "Not possible," you say. Yet we are surprised when God answers our prayers so quickly, like He did not have time to adequately prepare for our needs. Jesus warned His believers in Matthew 6:7-8, "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him," (KJV). So God never looks at the nearby angels after you pray and says, "I knew she was upset. Now I know what's bothering her. Why didn't she tell me sooner? I wish I'd have known!"

God knew Isaac needed a wife and not one from Canaan. Abraham is described in James 2:22 as a friend of God. He understood God's heart, so he understood that Isaac must marry from Abraham's kin back in Mesopotamia. In Genesis 14 we read how God used Abraham and his servants to rescue Lot and the King of Sodom when they were taken hostage. Afterwards the King of Sodom offered to reward Abraham, yet Genesis 14:22-23 reads, "And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto

the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich;" (KJV).

Abraham understood that he was not to be obligated to the impure Canaanites in the land that one day his offspring would possess. In the same



Explore the Bible

with Rick Henson

ourselves from impurity. How many marry unbelievers and suffer, or behave like the lost people with whom they associate? I Corinthians 15:33 warns that bad company corrupts good morals.

So Abraham's servant journeyed with a caravan of camels and other servants to Abraham's home country. He ended up in Nahor and God answered the servant's prayers. Not only did Rebekah offer water to both him

and his camels as he had prayed, she was kin to Abraham. Genesis 22:23 reads, "And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother," (KJV). Rebekah's father, Bethuel was the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother. So Bethuel was Isaac's first cousin, and Rebekah was Isaac's first cousin once removed.

We read this story and marvel that the Lord answered Abraham's servant's prayer so exactly. The girl for Isaac to marry did just as the servant asked and

was in the correct family. God led the servant to the right place and had prepared Rebekah for this day. Either He led the servant to pray about the events before He knew they would happen, or He caused the events to match the servant's prayer in order to reveal Rebekah. Either way, God did it. God spoke this world into existence. Psalms 147:3-5 reveals about the Creator, "He healeth the broken in

heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He calleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite," (KJV). God named all the stars. He knows everything. He made everything. Can having a girl water the camels be a hard task for God? I don't think so.

Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness, the bible says. Rebekah believed Abraham's servant. She left her father's home, with a man she did not know, going to a place she had never been, and to marry her husband she had never met. Abraham was not the only one demonstrating faith in the story. As God answered the prayer of the servant of Abraham, he also was leading Rebekah, who had a marvelous place in the future of the nation of Israel. Rebecca did not hear directly from God but trusted in the servant of someone who had. Like the people of the town of Sychar in John chapter four, they trusted in the testimony of the woman at the well until they met Jesus. The same God still uses His people today to introduce Jesus to those who haven't met Him yet.

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.

When Opposition Strikes • Acts 4:23-31

After a six-week study of Daniel and his friends, and their decades of failing – and triumphing over – opposition from a heathen empire, our last lesson for this quarter shows us how the early church faced such trials. The story picks up as these fledgling believers were displaying great boldness and unity by employing the Holy Spirit's power. Lives were being transformed by the thousands! And whenever God is mightily at work, Satan is sure to plan and commence a dastardly attack.

Such was the case here. Just as many Jewish leaders tried to thwart and discredit Jesus' work while He was physically here, these enemies of the cross sought to stir up trouble among the courageous body of believers. In Acts 3, Peter and John, on the way to an afternoon prayer-time at the temple, healed a man crippled from birth. This jubilant man drew quite a crowd, and Peter used the opportunity to preach a powerful sermon, issuing a call to repentance and belief in Jesus.

While Peter and John were speaking, the priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees, "greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 4:2 NIV), apprehended the two, putting them in jail overnight (v. 3). However, God's word certainly wasn't bound; "many who heard the message believed" (v. 4).

As the disciples were brought out the next day, they were questioned, giving Peter, "filled with the Holy Spirit" (v. 8), another opportunity to powerfully proclaim God's word. When the Jewish leaders saw the courage these unschooled and untrained fishermen exhibited, "they realized they had been with Jesus" (v. 13 NKJV). What a lesson; the Holy Spirit's control can take the weakest saints, and make them instruments of God's incredible power, ready to stand strong in the face of opposition,

and share God's word!

Trying to stop the gospel message from spreading further, the chief

priests and elders commanded Peter and John to refrain from such speaking, but the two adamantly refused, saying, "we cannot help speaking about what we have seen or heard" (v. 20 NIV).

Since there were no grounds to hold the two testifiers, they were released, returning to their brothers and sisters in Christ. As they shared what had transpired with their like-minded friends, a praise service broke out! The

fellow believers "raised their voices together in prayer to God" (v. 24 NIV). Recalling David's prophetic words in Psalm 2:1-2, they realized these words about the Lord's "anointed one" from the long-ago king were being fulfilled (vs. 25-26). Declaring in prayer that only what God's "power and will had decided beforehand should happen", they exalted the Lord together.

Note how the group prayed. They didn't request safety, personal comfort or deliverance from the difficult

situation. Instead, they implored the Lord to consider the threats and enable them to "speak [his] word

with great boldness". They also asked for God's hand (which represents his provision, his strength and his work) to be manifested by performing "signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus" (v. 30). The result? God's hand shook the place, filled those gathered with the Holy Spirit, and empowered them to courageously speak the message (v. 31).

We can likewise fearlessly face opposition and spiritual struggles. In

"Fervent", author Priscilla Shirer adds insight to the mighty "weapons" available to us (Ephesians 6:10-20). She says "the one weapon that ties this whole ensemble together, the one that activates the power of God Himself, is prayer." Of the words "at all times" in verse 18, she relates the meaning of the word (*kairos*) in the original language: it "refers to specific times, precise occasions, and particular events." On engaging the enemy, she reminds us, "our prayers need to be fervent and specific, strategic and personal, tied to the specific needs arising at that specific occasion. That's the kind of prayer that energizes the armor of God for maximum effectiveness...."

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV) encourages us: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." Jesus, preparing the Twelve for a "mission trip", gave them some instructions, adding, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16 NKJV). When we confront such opposition, let's be sure to respond with a godly mixture of spiritual boldness and humbleness of heart.

Ann Maniscalco is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ocean Springs.



Bible Studies for Life

with Ann Maniscalco

So. Baptists still on scene of Nepal tremor



ONLY RUBBLE LEFT — A mother carries her child through the streets of Kathmandu, Nepal, after the 7.8-magnitude earthquake in April. Because of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and Cooperative Program, Christian workers already are there, teaching believers how to share the Gospel and start new churches. (BP photo courtesy of International Mission Board)

SOUTH ASIA (BP) — The 7.8-magnitude earthquake that rocked Nepal in April, killing more than 9,000 people, quickly thrust the Asian nation into the spotlight. Relief agencies and volunteers — including Mississippi Baptists — arrived in the country's capital city of Kathmandu and outlying villages to offer help to Nepalis whose lives were forever changed.

Christian workers such as Carl Russell (not his real name) and Marcia and Drew Neely (not their real names) had already been at work in this predominantly Hindu country long before the world was watching the tumult.

They help teach believers in a church in Kathmandu how to share the Gospel with other people and how to start new churches. They also meet regularly with believers to disciple and pray with them.

In Nepal the number of believers is small, with less than one percent of nearly 28.8 million people trusting in Jesus, so when Nepali believers Amit and Kiran Thapa (not

their real names) saw that Christian workers were willing to invest their lives in helping to disciple and equip them as well as their church and other believers, they wanted to express their gratitude.

The Thapas made a financial donation to the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in honor of Russell and the Neelys. Their gesture from Asia reflects the gifts of thousands of other individuals and churches to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, aiming to make Kingdom work possible in Nepal and other unreached areas globally.

Amit and Kiran Thapa not only gave sacrificially, but their lives represent many among the world's peoples who have been impacted for the Gospel because Southern Baptists continue to support international missions through each year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering as well as their churches' year-round gifts through the Cooperative Program.

Learn more at imb.org/give.

Nepal constitution dispute results in fuel shortage

KATHMANDU, Nepal (BP) — A new, man-made disaster is complicating efforts to help Nepalis recover from the devastating earthquake that struck the country in April.

Ongoing protests over Nepal's new constitution have shut down the main road between India and Nepal since Sept. 24. The road is the primary supply line for fuel and food into Nepal. Nepal claims that India instituted a blockade along the border. News reports say dozens of fuel trucks are stranded at the border.

Nepal is heavily dependent on imports from India because it is landlocked by some of the world's tallest mountains. The fuel delivery stoppage has crippled Nepal and stalled all kinds of activities including earthquake recovery efforts, said workers involved in the Baptist Global Response (BGR) disaster relief effort in Nepal.

The initial BGR response in Nepal focused on survival needs like food, water, emergency shelter, health care, and hygiene kits. Disaster relief teams from Southern Baptist churches in California and Texas have played a key role in house deconstruction and rebuilding in two districts of the country.

BGR's primary focus now is providing sheets of tin that families can use to shelter from the elements while rebuilding their homes.

Long lines of motorcycles, trucks, buses, and cars ex-

tend down the streets of Kathmandu, said BGR partner Carl Russell (not his real name). Many drivers sit with their vehicles late into the night, hoping for an allotment of fuel. Personal vehicles are limited to four gallons at a time. A Nepali ministry partner recently paid the equivalent of \$32 a gallon for fuel.

Taxi and public transportation costs have tripled or quadrupled. Rising fuel costs have driven up prices for all supplies.

The crisis threatens the recovery effort, Russell said. "We have slowed down our work in the last few days considerably. We have a plan to start rebuilding some homes, but the cost has grown considerably, so we are putting the process on hold for now."

Long-distance international flights have been affected because of the difficulty in refueling. Hundreds of restaurants, including one that provides livelihood to Nepali believers, have closed due to the unavailability of cooking fuel. Several volunteer teams have canceled or postponed their trips, Russell noted.

On Oct. 28, Nepal signed a fuel deal with China. However, the main road that connects the two nations can only handle a certain number of large vehicles at a time and the area is prone to landslides, according to a BGR report.

The fuel crisis is taking an additional toll on workers al-

ready tired from the non-stop relief work.

"Weary does not begin to describe these days," said Marcia Neely (not her real name), who is assisting with the effort. "I recently arranged to pay nearly \$20 a gallon for a little bit of gas from someone who promises it is 'good.' I rode my bicycle to seven different pharmacies to try to get a prescription filled, and then only found half of what I need."

In Kathmandu, a shortage of fuel for public transportation has forced passengers to cling to racks designed for luggage on the roofs of the few buses still operating, making the vehicles lean heavily to one side with the threat of toppling over.

As winter approaches, the prospect of no fuel for household heat weighs heavily on many families. So far, relief workers have been able to find transportation into hard-hit areas for volunteers who are still coming, at a heavy cost financially.

Prayer for the effort in Nepal is greatly needed, said Jeff Palmer, BGR's executive director. "Please join us in prayer for a quick and peaceful resolution to this crisis. Pray for roads to open and for any blockades to be removed."

"Pray the Lord would pave the way for a smooth flow of fuel between both India and China. Pray that Nepali people would soon be able to have fuel for their vehicles, homes and businesses."



ON HOLD — Trucks carrying fuel, food, and other supplies sit idle and stranded at the border between India and Nepal. The lack of fuel in Nepal is seriously complicating Southern Baptist efforts to help Nepalis recover from the devastating earthquake that struck the country in April. (BP photo courtesy of Baptist Global Relief)

